
CT Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools
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Education Committee

March 7, 2011

Testimony of Martin Mador In Support of
SB 1102 AAC Authorization Of State Grant Commitments For School Building Projects And
Concerning Changes To The Statutes Concerning School Building Projects

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the volunteer Legislative Chair for the Sierra Club-Connecticut Chapter. I am also a director of Rivers Alliance and of the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association. I am LEED accredited, and hold a Masters of Environmental Management degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

I am here today as both the legislative co-chair of the Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools, and the Legislative Chair for the Sierra Club. I have been working on legislation for green buildings and green, healthy schools for the past nine years.

SB 1102 establishes a School Building Projects Advisory Council, and prescribes membership of the Council. Connecticut now has a mandatory green building protocol for design of schools built with state money (OPM agency regs 16a-38k). It must be our goal that we build, not just acceptable or minimally qualifying schools, but cutting edge, state of the art, schools which conserve energy, have minimal environmental impacts, promote accepted state environmental goals, provide optimal physical learning environments, and protect the health of the school's students, teachers, and staff.

To achieve this goal ConnFESS recommends amending the bill to add two positions to the Council: an expert on green building practices, and a building sciences expert on indoor environmental/air quality.

As all school construction oversight may move to the new Department of Construction Services per the language in SB 1020, we suggest the Council should be housed at the new department.

Never Again?

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Izzy Kornman and I am a tenth grader at Hall High School in West Hartford. I am here to talk about why I support bill 6499. I am also the granddaughter of two Holocaust survivors. In almost two years in public school, I have spent approximately five days on Holocaust education during Freshman year. If Hall can teach every incoming Freshman, approximately 400 teens each year, there is no reason that anyone else should not be able to. Between 1938 and 1945, more than six million Jews were massacred. In addition to those innocent souls, five million others were targeted and slaughtered because they were not up to Nazi standards. To most people, those are just numbers. For those seven years, Jews were just numbers, stripped of their names and their humanity. Now, those victims of a horrific race cleansing are becoming numbers once more, passed over in school systems nationwide. My grandmother, Irene Frisch, and my grandfather, Eugene Frisch, are not just numbers. They are people. They are survivors. Three generations on from the Holocaust, approximately one in three Americans does not even know what the Holocaust was or when it took place. Thirty-three percent of US citizens are shockingly unaware of one of the most gruesome massacres in recorded history. Now, with the number of survivors dwindling, it is more important than ever to pass a law mandating the study of the Holocaust.

In addition to the fact that people should know about the Holocaust for what happened there, people also need to learn about it to realize how easily it happened. Heather Bentley, an expert on Holocaust study, asserted that horrible things have happened, are happening, and will continue to happen if peace and tolerance are not taught. It is imperative to see the Holocaust not only as a historical event, but use it as a tool for teaching about the ideas of intolerance and what is necessary for society to survive. Without a state mandate, students will be going out into the world without this invaluable information. If all students like me are taught the lessons of the Holocaust, we will not be silent in the face of other mass killings wherever they take place.

This mandate is not just about the teaching of the Holocaust. It is much more than that. It is a doorway to talk about the ethics of genocide. The Holocaust is not one of the most enjoyable subjects, but it is essential to know about. Otherwise, it will surely happen all over again – the racism, genocide, horror. Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it. Teenagers like me are the future of our state and our country. If we are not taught about the atrocities of our past, we will not be able to recognize them in the future.

Never again? The world promised that we would never allow a mass genocide like the Holocaust to happen again. Look at Darfur. Look at Uganda. Genocides are happening right now. Who is going to stop them? Without knowledge of the Holocaust, tomorrow's world leaders will not be able to comprehend the severity of the situation. Thank you for your time.